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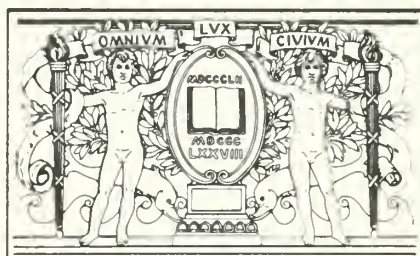


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The Boston Globe

Wednesday, April 12, 1972

End urged on welfare pick-ups

By Kay Longcope
Globe Staff

Massachusetts should dump its check pick-up program for employable general relief recipients because it is costing taxpayers double the amount of savings and is not putting many able-bodied persons to work.

That recommendation by the board of directors of United Community Services (UCS) will be sent this week to Gov. Sargent, Welfare Comr. Steven A. Minter and legislative leaders.

The program, which began last October, compels employable general relief recipients to report twice each month to local employment centers to pick up assistant checks and show that they are available for jobs.

In enacting the program, the Legislature intended to shave costs of general relief, which is financed entirely by the state and which last year cost more than \$50 million.

CHANGES

The UCS board also recommended changes if the program is to be continued.

It said that recipients should be classified as unemployable until individual case reviews determine otherwise; they should be given more than 24 hours in which to pick up checks; the Welfare Dept. and the Division of Employment Security should hammer out a common definition of "employability"; and persons living beyond walking distance of DES offices should be given traveling allowances.

The board also suggested that participants be given detailed program information and the right to appeal Welfare Dept. decisions as to their employability.

This is the first time any individual or group has recommended the program be scrapped, though Comr. Minter and spokesmen from DES have indicated it is a political boondoggle and the legislators' way of telling aggrieved taxpayers they are "doing something about welfare."

When the program first began last October, more than 11,000 of the 55,000 general relief recipients were declared employable.

GENERAL RELIEF WORK REGISTRATION:

Why Some Recipients Failed To Report



HEALTH & WELFARE PLANNING IN THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY AREA
14 SOMERSET STREET • BOSTON • MASS. 02108 •



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GENERAL RELIEF
WORK-REGISTRATION:

Why Some Recipients
Failed to Report

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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UNITED COMMUNITY SERVICES OF
METROPOLITAN BOSTON

April, 1972

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Acknowledgements

In late September 1971, Dr. Richard Rowland, Ex. Dir., Mass. Public Welfare Council, approached the United Community Services (UCS) Research Department about the possibilities of designing a study of the new General Relief (GR) Division of Employment Security (DES) work registration program in Massachusetts. Soon after that we learned that the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) had already asked the Social Welfare Regional Research Institute (SWRRI) in the Institute of Human Sciences at Boston College to examine all aspects of that program, administrative costs and problems, its effects on Department personnel and recipients, etc. Dr. Rowland contacted Dr. Martin Lowenthal, Director SWRRI, and at a subsequent meeting the UCS Research Department agreed to survey those GR recipients who failed to pick up their checks at DES as scheduled. It was agreed that our findings would be published as a section of the final SWRRI report to the DPW* and that other uses of the data could be made by UCS.

This study is part of UCS's continuing interest in the public welfare system. In 1967, UCS co-sponsored legislation which resulted in state reorganization of the public welfare system. Last year this Research Department did an extensive study of the effects of the Flat Grant Program on AFDC Recipients which was widely distributed.

*An Evaluation Study of the General Relief - Division of Employment Security Program, Social Welfare Regional Research Institute at Boston College with the collaboration of United Community Services of Metropolitan Boston, March, 1972. (See Appendix I for a Summary of Findings.)



We want to thank Dr. Richard Rowland who carefully read the initial draft of the findings for this report and Mrs. Michelina Tawa, UCS Planning Associate in Public Policy, who offered inestimable advice and guidance.

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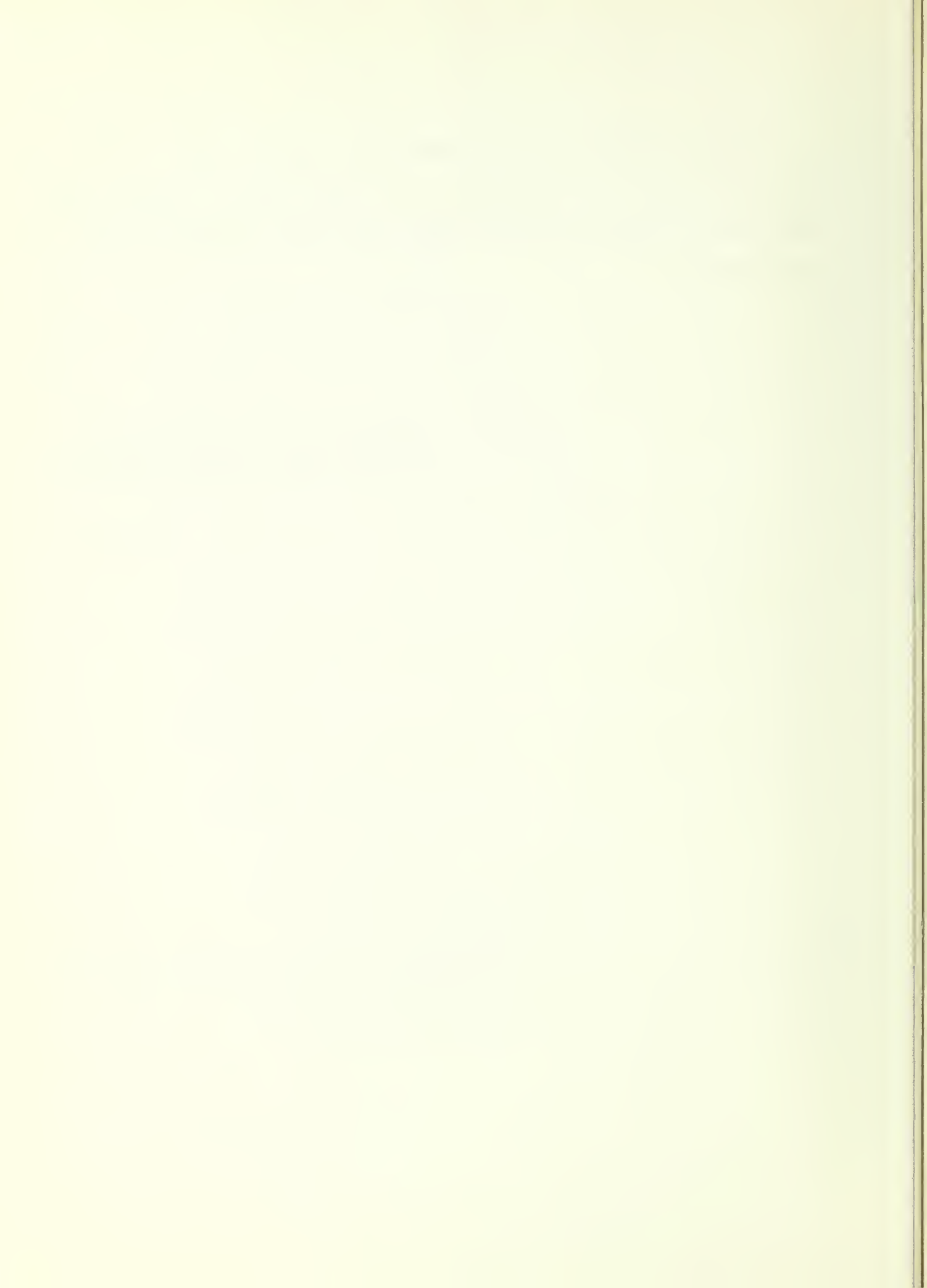


Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgements	
Introduction	i
Summary of Findings	1
Legislative History	2
Survey Results	11
Public Policy Recommendations	31
Appendices	33
I Summary of Findings of An <u>Evaluation Study of the General Relief - Division of Employment Security Program</u>	
II Conclusions from <u>The New York Welfare Work Legislation in New York State: A Study and Evaluation in Monroe County</u>	
III Survey Instrument	
IV Methodology	



Introduction

In the last year and a half two states, New York and Massachusetts have instituted work registration programs for welfare recipients. Administrative procedures, categories covered and types of work arranged vary from one program to the other. Essentially, however, both programs divide recipients into two groups, "employable" and "unemployable". The semi-monthly checks of employable recipients are then withheld until they register for work. In Massachusetts General Relief (GR) recipients, judged by their caseworkers to be employable, were told to report to the Division of Employment Security (DES) to pick up their checks. If the recipient were a full-time student (but not in college), employee or job trainee, medically (mental or physical) incapacitated or caring for a wholly incapacitated relative, he or she was considered to be unemployable. Everyone else, including members of the above group for whom independent verification of their situation, in writing (principal, doctor, etc.), had not been obtained, were presumed to be employable. At DES each recipient was interviewed by a job counselor and referred to a job, if one were available, referred to a training program, if appropriate, or determined to be unemployable. After all was said and done, the recipient would receive his or her check. If the recipient failed to report within 24 hours or refused an interview, job or training referral, he or she would be dropped from the welfare roles. This process would be repeated every two weeks.



Two assumptions about the nature of welfare recipients and the rising costs of welfare seem to have created the recent development of job registration programs; that significant numbers of recipients are ineligible for or fraudulently receiving benefits and that most recipients, if induced to do so, could enter the labor market. An examination of these assumptions is beyond the scope of this study. However, studies done for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), have repeatedly shown them to be false.

This report is concerned with what Jule Sugarman, chief of New York City's Human Resources Administration, called "the grossly untrue impression¹ that 20% of the welfare rolls are there improperly", after the beginning of New York State's work registration program. In Massachusetts, as in New York, it was first headlined that 20% of those determined to be employable failed to pick up their check as scheduled. The initial impression on the part of the press and the public has been that the job registration program has "blown the cover" of a significant number of able-bodied individuals who were knowledgeably ineligible and unwilling to seek employment. The Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare (DPW) has argued that the figure is deceptive, "illness, transportation problems and improper classification are just some of the numerous reasons to explain failures to report," said Welfare Comm. Steven Minter, who also cited a normal monthly turnover of² 16% of the total caseload. Before this study, no one really knew who the "no shows", as they have been called, really were.

¹ New York Times, October 4, 1971.

² Boston Globe, December 8, 1971.



In its initial (September, 1971) study of the impact of the New York State Work Relief Law, the Community Council of Greater New York suggested that "an objective agency, (not DES (the equivalent of our DPW) or NYSES (the equivalent of our DES), study those persons who failed to pick up checks at NYSES offices in order to understand all of the reasons for some clients' non-compliance with the new law."³ The UCS Research Department proposed to do such a study here. Since that time the Rochester, N.Y., League of Women Voters and Center for Community Issues Research have⁴ issued a report similar in its methodology and conclusions to the joint SWRRI-UCS report to the DPW.

While information for these reports was being gathered, Congress chose to mandate a national work-registration program for all AFDC recipients. The Talmadge Amendment to the Work Incentive Program, passed by Congress without debate, signed by the President in December 1971, directs all states beginning in July 1972 to separate their AFDC families into "employable" and "unemployable" categories. Recipient willingness to participate in a work-registration program would become a new condition of eligibility for aid and substantial financial incentives are offered to states to classify 15% or more of their AFDC caseload "employable".

HEW will probably issue administrative guidelines under the Talmadge

³"Observations of the Impact of the 1971 State Social Services Law, Chapter 102", by the Staff of Community Council of Greater New York.

⁴The New Welfare Work Legislation in New York State: A Study and Evaluation in Monroe County, prepared by the League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metropolitan Area and the Center for Community Issues Research, December, 1971. (See Appendix II for a Summary of their Findings.)



work-registration Amendment near the end of March.

In light of research into and experience with the work-registration program here in Massachusetts (see Appendix I) and similar findings by an independent study of the program in New York (see Appendix II), the only reasonable conclusions that can be drawn are that Congress should reconsider the Talmadge Amendment and that Massachusetts should discontinue its GR/DES program (see the Recommendations section of this Report). In New York, a number of well-established agencies have gone to court charging that that state's work-registration program is a "distortion of a program originally designed to assist and alleviate distress into an instrument of coercion and intimidation" with "a total repudiation of humanitarian values".⁶

Before this examination of the GR/DES work-registration program "no-shows" in Massachusetts proceeds, the relationship of GR to the general welfare situation should be explained. In September, General Relief recipients (55,101) made up 11% of the state welfare population (522,112) and 13.5% of state welfare expenditures after federal reimbursement⁷ (\$37,670,973,50)⁸. The 11,507 GR recipients initially determined to be employable by the DPW represented 2% of the total number of people receiving assistance and 2.8% of state costs. In October DES reclassified 5,941 of these individuals, "unemployable" and sent them back to the DPW.⁹ Ultimately "employable" GR recipients, the number actually affected by the program, represented approximately 1% of the state's welfare recipients and only 1.4% of total state costs.

⁵ HEW is required to publish all new regulations in advance of implementation so that interested individuals and organizations can react.

⁶ New York Times, February 27, 1972

⁷ These figures and those that follow are based on reported DPW figures for September, 1971.

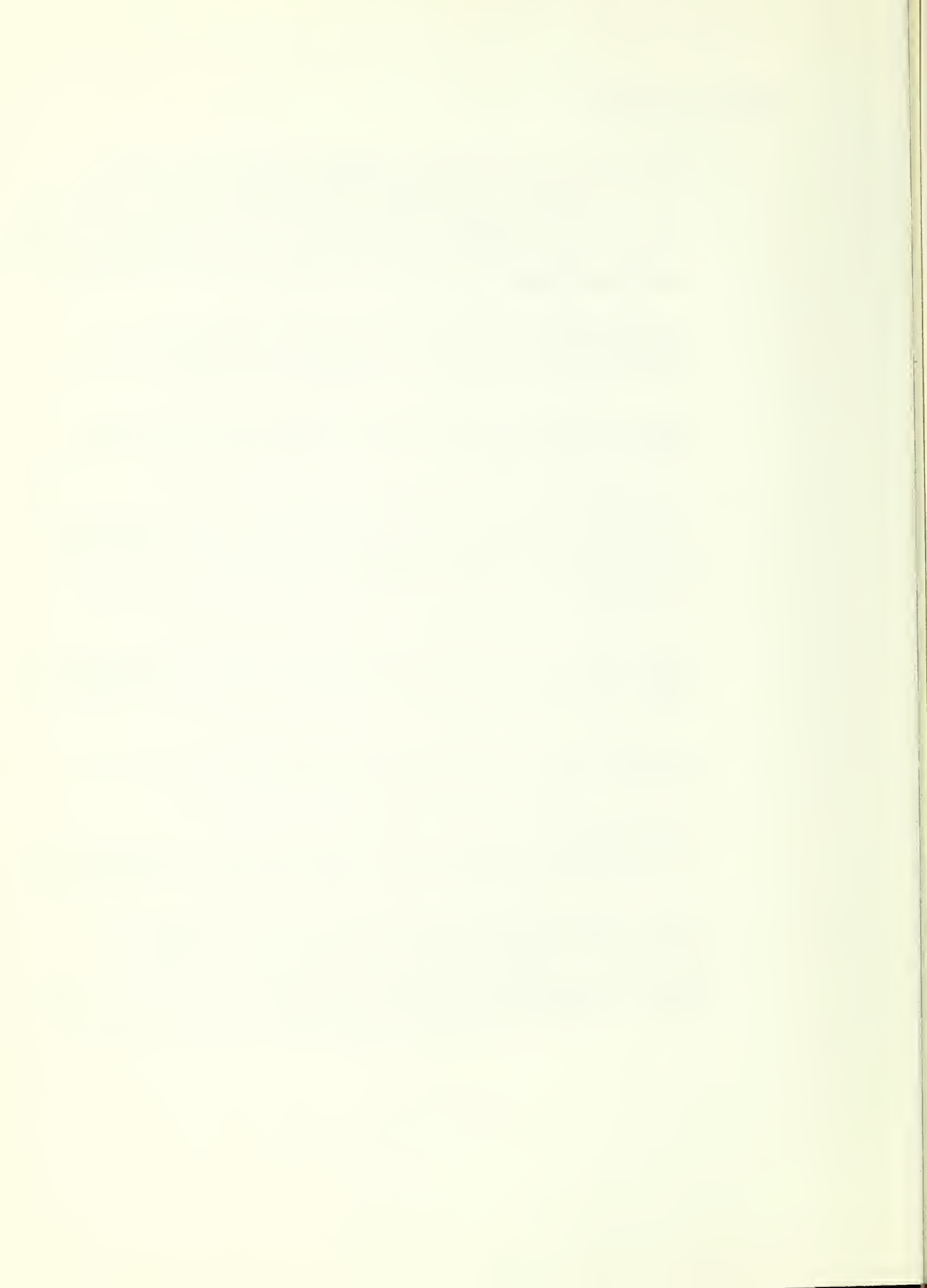
⁸ Boston Globe, December 8, 1971

⁹ Ibid.



Summary of Findings

- 1) Those who failed to report on October 15th did not differ significantly from the rest of the GR population. One half of the recipients in our survey population were over 40 years old and only 5% lived in public housing. Nine per cent had difficulty with or spoke no English. These figures are substantially the same as those for all GR recipients appearing in the DPW's Survey of General Assistance.
- 2) The major reasons for "failure to report" to DES were error (the recipient did report and yet was not counted as reporting), illness, current employment, and lack of knowledge about the new procedure.
- 3) Twenty-seven per cent of those interviewed said they did not receive the Welfare Department notice to pick up their October 15th checks at a DES office.
- 4) For the 35% of those interviewed who did go to DES, mix-ups caused, it is assumed in some cases by clerical error and in others by recipient misunderstanding, resulted in unnecessary trips to the Welfare Department, missed **checks** that were not replaced and no doubt additional work by employees of DES and DPW in tracing their checks.
- 5) By the time of our interviews, eight to ten weeks after the program started, 64% of those whose GR eligibility had been **reaffirmed** (their checks had been resumed) had yet to receive back checks due them from the Department.
- 6) From 40%-60% of our respondents were unemployable, especially in the present labor market and those who seemed to be most employable had apparently secured jobs on their own.
- 7) A comparison of our sample with the December 15, 1971 and January 1, 1972 Welfare Department payrolls shows that 45% of our sample were re-evaluated by the Welfare Department and determined unemployable.
- 8) Another comparison of our sample with the same December and January payrolls shows that as many as 77% of our sample were still on GR. After review by its caseworkers the Welfare Department has obviously determined (as has this study) that their reasons for failure to report were legitimate and that they still needed for some reason beyond their control, outside assistance.



Legislative History

Passage of the 1971 Appropriations Act (Budget) which contained the following amendment:

"that after October first, nineteen hundred and seventy-one every person eligible for an assistance check under Chapter One Hundred and Seventeen of the General Laws (General Relief), determined by the Department to be an employable person, shall receive such check from the nearest office of the Division of Employment Security," established the Massachusetts work-registration program for welfare recipients. This section attempts to describe the events leading up to that amendment and the political climate in which it was made.

Until the 1971 legislative session recent years have seen only two major changes in the operation of public welfare in Massachusetts. The first, Reorganization of Public Welfare in 1967, empowered the DPW to administer the state's welfare programs, all of which had previously been under local control. The second, the Flat Grant in 1970, eliminated the Special Needs Program for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and replaced it with a separate quarterly payment. This restricted the AFDC program's ability to respond flexibly to family emergencies. However, since it appears that more money was spent on Flat Grant payments than had been spent under the Special Needs program, it may have increased the amount



of money going to recipients.¹⁰

In 1971, for the first time, Massachusetts witnessed a step away from the liberal philosophy on which the welfare system was originally founded. This change, the Massachusetts Work-Registration program, can be traced to a number of events. Underlying all of them, however, were two major developments, (1) increasing pressure on the tax dollar, coupled with but not directly related to an expanding welfare budget and (2) a mounting tide of criticism aimed at the administration of public welfare as well as charges of fraud leveled at recipients and vendors.

In 1971 Welfare expenditures, before federal reimbursement, were expected to exceed one billion dollars for the first time. Although these expectations were not realized they did have a psychological impact and made headlines. Forced to raise revenues to meet increasing operating costs in all areas of governmental activity, the Governor submitted a major new tax package - the first since 1967 - with his appropriations bill. Complicating the tax picture was a request from the Governor for funds for a number of cabinet and staff positions to implement his executive reorganization plan which had been approved the year before. The legislature, frustrated by what it saw as increasing ineptness and inefficiency in the administration of public

¹⁰Mark Irvings, Focus On A Social Welfare Policy: The Flat Grant In Massachusetts, pp. 136-142.



welfare, was unwilling to increase taxes or the Governor's staff until some administrative reforms were promised.

As the strain on the state tax dollar increased, criticism of the DPW's administrative practices came from all sides - including the DPW itself.

Six major studies, three by the Welfare Department, two by the federal government and one by the state legislature, all of them implying criticism of the Massachusetts Public Welfare System, were released during the session.¹¹ The timing was often inopportune. The Department's first report **was released just before** the first deficiency budget came up in the House. It was slashed 50%. A third report was released by the Department five days before the tax bill first came out in the Senate. It was defeated. All six studies were issued before the Senate attached the work-registration amendment to the appropriations bill.

Antagonisms between a Democratic legislature and
Republican executive helped to prevent a smooth resolution of the state's 1971 administrative and fiscal crises. Welfare recipients were caught in the middle.

¹¹The DPW conducted several surveys to determine the incidence of ineligibility through administrative oversight, staff error and client misunderstanding - not simply client or vendor fraud - among recipients. The Department found that as many as 8% of its clients in all categories might be ineligible. In the Department's survey population, 14% of those receiving General Relief and 25% of those listed as eligible for Medicaid were found to be unqualified. (Herald Traveler, March 12, 1971, p.3)

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare attacked certain administrative practices within the Department and reported that, of the large cities in the U.S., Boston had the highest percentage of its people on welfare. (Boston Globe, March 11, 1971, p.1).



Democratic and Republican members of the legislature driven by rising government costs and constituent complaints about welfare, were in no mood to protect welfare recipient needs. Rhetoric early in the session and the bills filed in June by the Special Investigating Committee show that they intended to try to reduce the welfare budget by cutting the welfare rolls. The Governor's welfare deficiency budget was cut and delayed more than usual. It was finally passed in mid-June but without including the cost of living increase for AFDC recipients. The new tax package, at first summarily defeated, passed in late July after a long and heated debate about welfare.

In June the Joint Special Legislative Committee Investigating Welfare issued its report. The report included both majority and minority recommendations. The majority recommended the establishment of a one-year residency requirement for all recipients and a Fraudulent Claims Commission in the State Auditor's office. It also recommended that the legislature mandate certain changes in the GR program; such as, making students ineligible, making some relatives liable for the recipients in their extended families, detailing the procedures to be used for redetermining GR eligibility every 90 days and (again) requiring registration with DES as a condition of eligibility. In addition, the minority recommended an 850 million dollar ceiling on welfare expenditures and an Ecology Corps for recipients to work for their grants.



On August 11th, the Senate, charging executive mismanagement of the welfare system, cut 50 million dollars from the Medicaid line item before passing the appropriations bill. It also approved the amendment, quoted at the beginning of this section, creating a work-registration program. The next day the Senate restored the Medicaid money. But, on August 24th, when the appropriations bill came up in the House for final approval, the Representatives - citing rising Medicaid costs - defeated it. Two days later the appropriations bill was used, by members of the House who wished to "control" welfare, as a tool to force House action on the Investigating Committee's Report. Both the minority and majority recommendations were passed and sent to the Senate. Then, the appropriations bill, with Medicaid and the GR Work-Registration amendment intact, was sent to the Governor for his signature. Later, the majority report's Fraud Squad and GR recommendations, after Senate action, became law in slightly amended form. The minority report's recommendations, along with the majority's one year residency requirement, died in the Senate Social Welfare Committee.

While all this was going on, the Republican Governor's office was trying to show that it was making every effort to control the welfare system and retain its liberal philosophy.



From March through June, presumably reacting to legislative pressure, the Governor and Commissioner announced a number of changes in the welfare system. The most important, billed as the first of several steps "to reduce both the cost and the size of our public welfare program" was directed at General Relief recipients.¹² Administrative changes were made in the regulations in order to "reduce the number of people eligible and thereby reduce the total cost of the program."¹³ Sargent admitted that these changes were "stringent and, in the eyes of some, possibly harsh. But the times are difficult and strong measures are needed."¹⁴ In the ensuing weeks he proposed a fifty member "fraud squad" to investigate and prosecute instances of welfare "abuse" and temporarily suspended all Medicaid payments. (Medicaid is a vendor program. No money goes directly to recipients). The Department also ruled that women seeking GR assistance would have to place their names on file with DES and periodically produce evidence that they had called DES but had found no jobs were available. Previously, only men had to follow this procedure.

After the Senate cut 50 million dollars from the Medicaid budget, Governor Sargent went on statewide television to

¹²Herald-Traveler, March 27, 1971, p.1.

¹³Boston Globe, March 26, 1971, p.1.

¹⁴Boston Globe, March 26, 1971, p.1.



promise that he would veto any appropriation bill which included Medicaid cuts or a welfare residency requirement. He also announced his support for the Ribicoff Plan (sic) which sought a guaranteed annual income of \$3,600 for a family of four and complete federal take-over of all welfare costs. He asked the legislature to stop playing politics with welfare, "I will not take the road of cutback, of denial, of punishment of the poor for being poor."¹⁵

The Democratic Speaker of the House who supported the Governor's new sales and income tax levies, concentrated his criticism on the welfare system's administrative faults. His office hired three computer experts to look into the DPW's computer operations. After the Governor went on television in August the Speaker asked for and received equal time. He charged that the Governor had saddled the taxpayers of Massachusetts with a welfare "mismanagement tax" of more than 250 million dollars in fiscal year 1970.¹⁶ He said that what really frustrated the legislators was what they saw as extensive, inexcusable mismanagement of the welfare system. The speech suggested that, if the Governor indicated a willingness to adopt several proposals to improve the state

¹⁵ Boston Globe, August 16, 1971, p.1.

¹⁶ Herald-Traveler, August 20, 1971, p.1.



welfare system, the legislators might more readily approve his budget. They were: 1)that the Governor ask the Massachusetts Supreme Court for a ruling on the constitutionality of a residency requirement, 2)that he require able-bodied GR recipients to pick their checks up at DES, 3)that the Medicaid program reimburse the purchase of generic drugs only, 4)that he enlarge his proposed fraud squad, 5)that he make an all-out effort to effectively computerize the Department's operations and 6)that he quickly separate social service from financial functions and clear the vendor back-log. The Speaker said that no new legislation would be needed to complege these tasks.¹⁷

Throughout the legislative session, the Speaker had repeatedly described the members concerns saying that, although he did not believe that welfare "abuse" was a major problem, many of the members of the legislature did. Their belief that "the state wouldn't need half the money the Governor was asking for if a substantial portion of it wasn't going down the drain in welfare abuse" led to the defeat of the tax package in March, 1971.¹⁸

¹⁷The Welfare Scene, September 10, 1971, p.10.

¹⁸Herald-Traveler, March 8, 1971



He made a similar statement on April 17th and again on July 12th when he said, "legislators consider it (welfare) the major scandal of the Sargent administration".¹⁹ Just before adjournment in the House, on November 10th, the acknowledged leader of those in the House who wish to "control" welfare, attacked the Speaker in an emotional speech from the floor for not working hard enough for the passage of those welfare bills which the House had passed but which had died in the Senate Social Welfare Committee and generally impeding attempts to cut welfare. He resigned in protest from his positions as Chairman of the House Social Welfare Committee and the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Welfare.

This section has presented the political background involved in the work-registration program for GR recipients. On October 15, 1971, GR recipients classified as "employable" began to report to DES offices to collect their checks.

¹⁹ Herald-Traveler, July 13, 1971.



Survey Results²⁰

What follows is a report on two studies of the 1,339 "Employable" persons from Boston and Lowell who failed to pick up their General Relief (GR) checks at the Division of Employment Security (DES) as scheduled for the October 15, 1971 pay period. These studies were undertaken to determine the characteristics of these individuals and why they failed to report to DES.

The first section discusses the information gathered during personal interviews with a random sample of recipients who failed to report to a DES office. The second section describes what we found when we compared the same sample with the December 15th General Relief payroll at the Department of Public Welfare.

I. Interviews With Recipients Listed As "Failing to Report" to DES

The original goal of this survey was to find out why some General Relief recipients failed to report to a DES office to pick up their checks. Publicity surrounding the "18.6% failed-to-report rate"²¹ fueled the public assumption that these people were "welfare chislers." In New York State, where a similar program was put into effect in August of 1971, a comparable "failed-to-report" rate was well noted by the media. Further investigation showed that the

²⁰This section is also included in An Evaluation Study of the General Relief Division of Employment Security Program, by the Social Welfare Regional Research Institute at Boston College with the collaboration of United Community Services of Metropolitan Boston as Chapter IV, pp. 26-43.

²¹Boston Globe, November 6, 1971, p.1.

assumption of fraud in these cases was unfounded. Some recipients were ill and could not pick up their checks, others had erroneously been classified as employable and still others actually did report, but through clerical error their checks were not at the proper state employment center.²²

To provide reliable information in this area for Massachusetts, a survey instrument (See Appendix III) was built around the questions, "Did you go to the Division of Employment Security (Employment Office) to pick up your last check?" and "Why didn't you go there?"

As the questionnaire was developed, other survey goals emerged. For example, of those who did report to DES in October, 43.5% were found to be unemployable.²³ Being determined unemployable meant that the recipient could again receive his/her General Relief check in the mail and need not make the trip to DES. If such a large proportion of those who did report were unemployable, might not an equally large proportion of those who failed to report also be unemployable? Therefore, questions were added to the survey instrument about current employment, if any, previous employment, fluency in English and physical disabilities. Interviewers were also asked to give their general impressions of a respondent's potential employability.

Other general questions -- age, sex, race, living arrangements, length of residence in Massachusetts and length of time receiving

²²New York Times, October 4, 1971, p.1.

²³Boston Globe, November 6, 1971, p.1.



General Relief -- were included to provide a framework for comparison of this sample with the total General Relief population.

Another major area of interest that developed in constructing the questionnaire was the administration of the new system. Concern arose as to whether or not people received notice of the new regulations, whether they understood the instructions, and whether there was any follow-up by the Department of Public Welfare when people failed to report to DES. Questions were included to provide data in these areas.

When the questionnaire was completed, interviewers were trained to administer it, and a random sample of recipients who failed to report was chosen from a list of recipients supplied by the Department of Public Welfare. Because of regulations, the Department was required to contact all potential interviewees before their names were given to us (contact was by letter). Those who failed to indicate an unwillingness to be interviewed by returning a postcard that was enclosed were included in the list of names supplied by the Department. For a complete description of Methodology, see Appendix IV.

Since it was impossible to conduct personal interviews across the state, it was decided to limit the survey to two cities. Boston was chosen since it **represents** 41% of the General Relief caseload in the state.²⁴

²⁴ Annual Statistical Report Fiscal Year 1971, Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare, p. 24.

It was also decided to interview recipients in Lowell, which represents 3% of the General Relief caseload, but which has an unemployment rate much higher than the state average, and which is in much the same economic downturn as other mill towns which can no longer sustain their working population at previous levels. Since the number of persons in Lowell who failed to pick up their checks was small, it was decided to attempt to interview all of them instead of drawing a sample. Differences in responses between Boston and Lowell were insignificant for most variables, and will be mentioned only when they are significant.

Interviewing was conducted from December 23, 1971 to January 31, 1972. Following are the results of these interviews.

A. The Survey Population -- A Comparison With General Relief Recipients Statewide

Were there differences between those who failed to report to DES and other General Relief recipients -- differences in such variables as age, sex, living arrangements, race, etc.? A comparison of the Department of Public Welfare's survey of General Relief recipients²⁵ with this survey shows that in both instances, one-half of the recipients were over 40 years old and only 5% lived in public housing. The Department's survey indicated that about 6% of General Relief recipients spoke either no English, or just "some" English, while our survey showed a slightly higher percentage. Of those who were recorded as failing to report to DES, 9% had difficulty with or spoke no English.

²⁵A Survey of General Assistance in Massachusetts, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Public Welfare, Public Document 5698, June 1971.



In the state as a whole, there are more female than male General Relief recipients (54% female, 46% male). Those who failed to report were more likely to be males (55%) than females (45%). This most probably reflects the original determination of employability by the Welfare Department -- females were probably less likely to be designated employable than males were.

Since the Welfare Department's survey was statewide, it is difficult to compare the variables of race and previous place of residence with this survey, which was only conducted in Boston and Lowell. For example, Boston accounts for the largest concentration of blacks in the state. This is reflected in our survey, in which 36% of the respondents were black. The Welfare Department's report would indicate that less than 20% of the General Relief recipients in the state were non-white. Since Boston is the state's major city, it would be natural too, that it would attract more people from out of state who wanted to take up residence here than would some other areas. Our survey showed that of those classified as failing to report to DES, almost two-thirds had lived in Massachusetts for 16 years or more (48% for all of their lives).



Table 1

Length of Residence in Massachusetts

<u>Length of Residence</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Whole life	48%
16 years or more	16
4-15 years	18
1-3 years	14
Less than 1 year	1
Not ascertained	3
	<u>100%</u>
	(N=96)

In regard to length of time the recipient has been receiving General Relief benefits, our survey showed that 16% had been receiving General Relief for less than three months. The survey by the Welfare Department showed that, statewide, 24% of recipients had been receiving General Relief for less than three months. The same percentages in both surveys had been receiving General Relief for three to six months (about 20%), six months to a year (about 21%), and 32% in the Welfare Department survey, and 36% in our survey had been receiving General Relief for a year or more.

The Welfare Department stated that individual adults "constituted nearly 70% of the cases, families with children 20% and married couples without children 8%."²⁶ Our survey showed that for those who failed to report, 58% were individual adults, 29% were in families with children and 13% were married and without children.

In summary, it appears that those who were recorded as failing to report to a DES office in October from Boston and Lowell did not differ greatly from the General Relief recipients statewide.

²⁶Ibid., p. 40.



The differences that do exist may be related to geography (our sample was in Boston and Lowell, the only sample we can compare it to is a statewide one) or the tendency to classify some recipients as more employable than others through review of records (men in general, for example, and married men in particular). There is no evidence to suggest that those who failed to report were young, healthy, single recipients who simply did not want to work.

B. Reasons For Failure To Report

Approximately 2,100 persons across the state failed to pick up their General Relief checks for the October 15, 1971 pay period.²⁷ Table 2 below provides a breakdown of responses to the question, "Why didn't you go there?" (to the Employment Office) for the recipients we interviewed.

Table 2

Responses to Question Regarding Check Pick-Up

<u>Response</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Did report to DES (check not there, switched to another Welfare category, determined unemployable, etc.)	36%
Did not report because:	
Illness	25
Working	14
Did not know about new system	7
Assumed no longer eligible	4
No longer needed GR checks	3
Made other arrangements with Welfare	2
Other (no transportation money, forgot, already been there before, etc. Only two people said they did not report because they did not want to be interviewed for a job).	9
	<u>100%</u>
	(N=96)

²⁷Boston Globe, November 6, 1971, p.1.



As the table shows, the major reasons for "failure to report" were error (the recipient did report and yet was not counted as reporting), illness, current employment, and lack of knowledge about the new procedure. It became quite obvious from the interviews that many recipients, some of whom had found jobs on their own or who no longer needed their General Relief checks for other reasons, were part of the "normal turnover rate." They would have been dropped from the Welfare rolls regardless of what kind of a check distribution system (mail or pick-up) was in effect.

Comparisons were made on a number of variables for three groups of respondents -- 1) those who did not pick up their checks because they were ill, 2) because they were working, and 3) because they did not know about the new system.

As might be expected, those who were working tended to be younger, have fewer visible handicaps, were much more likely to speak English fluently and were more likely to be white than those who were ill or who did not know about the new system. In short, those who were working were more "employable".

Those who reported that they were ill and therefore could not pick up their checks at DES were older than the other respondents interviewed (almost half were 51 years old or older), more than half had a visible physical handicap or disability as reported by the interviewer, and they were more likely than other respondents to be black.²⁸

²⁸A survey of the Boston Metropolitan area in 1965 showed that non-whites were more likely to have one or more chronic health conditions than whites, and they were less likely to see a doctor regularly. (Unpublished statistical tables from the Community Research Project, co-sponsored by United Community Services, Combined Jewish Philanthropies and the U.S. Public Health Service.)



Those who did not know about the new check pick-up system, and therefore did not report to DES were, as a group, more likely either not to speak English or to speak English with hesitation than were other respondents. Only five Spanish-speaking individuals were interviewed in this survey, but three of them did not know about the new system until our interviewers got there over two months after the system had gone into effect.

In summary, it seems evident that in Massachusetts, as in New York, the nearly 20% "failure-to-report" rate can be accounted for almost totally by clerical error, error on the part of the recipient (reporting a day late, for example), erroneous determination of employability (including classifying visibly handicapped individuals as employable), failure to make it possible for employed recipients to schedule check pick-up appointments, and the normal turnover rate. However, the normal turnover rate, which averages around 16% per month, does not seem to be responsible for the greatest proportion of the "failure-to-report" rate. The other variables cited seem to be more important determinants of the "failure-to-report".

C. Employability

All of those interviewed for this report had been classified as "employable" by the Department of Public Welfare. Analysis of the data collected indicates that much of this determination of employability was incorrect. Furthermore, a comparison of our sample with the December 15 and January 1, 1972 Welfare Department payrolls shows that 45% of our sample were re-evaluated by the



Welfare Department and determined unemployable. Our data support this change in classification. For example, one-third of the respondents were 51 years old or older, 9% did not speak English fluently, and 38% had at least one visible handicap.

The visible handicaps noted by our interviewers are expressed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

<u>Presence of Visible Handicaps Or Physical Disabilities</u>	
<u>Problem Area</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Frail, feeble, senile, etc.	10%
Difficulty walking	9
Alcoholic	4
Labored breathing	3
Hand or leg injury	3
Back or neck brace	2
Speech impediment	2
Other	2
More than one of the above	3
No visible handicap or disability	62
	<u>100%</u>
	(N=96)

All of these factors - health problems, age, language difficulties - tend to be barriers against employment, as does race, (41% were Black or Spanish-speaking), regardless of Equal Opportunity regulations. In addition, even though 91% of those interviewed had some work experience, the jobs they held were most likely to be low paying and unskilled, as Table 4 shows:



Table 4

Occupational Categories

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Professional, technical	0%
Managers, officials, proprietors	1
Clerical	7
Sales	2
Craftsmen, foremen	7
Operatives	16
Private household	2
Service	31
Laborers	23
Never worked	3
Not ascertained	8
	<u>100%</u>
	(N=96)

Over half of those interviewed had work experience in either service or laboring occupations (such things as janitors, attendants, porters, counter-workers and unskilled laborers).

Of course, there were some individuals who were "employable" and many of these people were working at the time of the interview.

The survey of General Relief recipients undertaken by the Welfare Department in 1971²⁹ showed that 7% of adults in households receiving General Relief were employed. As was noted in Section B, 14% of the respondents interviewed for the present study reported that it was because they were currently employed

²⁹A Survey of General Assistance in Massachusetts, op-cit., p.44.



that they could not pick up their checks at DES. (Four per cent had just found jobs, and the other 10% had been working for a longer period of time.) By the time these individuals were interviewed, 30% were currently employed, almost three-fourths of them full-time. Respondents in Lowell seemed slightly more likely than other respondents to be working at the time of the interview even though Lowell's unemployment rate is higher than Boston's. (However, over half of those working in Lowell were employed as laborers.) Again, however, well over half of those employed in Boston and Lowell were working in service or laboring occupations, although 20% did manage to secure clerical or sales positions.

For those not presently employed, 40% said they would work if they could find a job. A review of the questionnaires shows, however, that many of these people would have difficulty securing employment, especially since many of those not currently working have not worked for a number of years. About 20% of those not currently employed have not worked for 3 years or more.

Those who were not working, and who reported that they were unable to work were asked the reasons why they could not take jobs. Over two-thirds cited sickness or injury as the barrier to their employment.

In summary, it is apparent from our interviews that from 40% to 60% of the respondents were unemployable, especially in the prevailing labor market. Some of these people may have been marginally employable if appropriate jobs were available, but it



would still probably be necessary to supplement their incomes with welfare payments. Those who seem to be most employable have apparently secured jobs on their own. It is obvious that a more careful determination of "employability" should have been made so that, for those who did report to DES, their time and the time of the DES interviewers would not have been wasted, and for those who did not report, the hardship imposed in attempting to prove their unemployability and the concomitant red tape and waste of time, energy and money could have been avoided.

D. Administration of the New Check Pick-Up System

A major concern in conducting this study was to determine whether or not failure to receive adequate notice of the new regulations or a misunderstanding of them on the part of recipients contributed to the "failure-to-report" rate. Respondents were asked whether they received the Welfare Department mailing on the new regulations and also to explain what the notice said (this enabled us to determine whether or not they understood it).

Twenty-seven per cent of those interviewed said they did not receive the Welfare Department notice to pick up their October 15th checks at a DES office. Most of these people, however, did find out about the new procedure - from other people, from their caseworker, while at the Welfare Department to find out what happened to their checks - although there **were still some people who were unaware of the new procedure until our interviewers visited them. Some people found out about the procedure**



too late, missed picking up their checks at DES, and were included in the "failure-to-report" rate.

As mentioned in Section B, 35% of those interviewed did go to DES to pick up their checks. We asked these people what happened at DES. For over 40% of them, their checks were not there. These mix-ups, caused, it is assumed, in some cases by clerical error and in others by misunderstanding on the recipients' part, resulted in unnecessary trips to the Welfare Department, missed checks that were not replaced^{*} and no doubt additional work by employees of DES and the Welfare Department in tracing the checks.

Follow-up by the Department of Public Welfare on those who failed to report to DES was spotty at best. Fifty-eight per cent of those interviewed who did not go to DES had not been contacted by the Welfare Department by the time the interviews were conducted (late December-early January), to determine why they failed to report. In an additional 13% of the cases, the recipients contacted the Welfare Department themselves. Respondents living in Lowell were more likely than respondents in Boston to have been contacted by the Welfare Department when they failed to pick up their checks.

* By the time of their interviews, 64% of those whose GR eligibility had been reaffirmed (their checks had been resumed) had yet to receive back checks due them from the Department.



In short, our interviews pointed to some definite problems in the administration of the new system, at least as far as notification and follow-up of recipients is concerned. It is fortunate that informal channels of communication do exist among some recipients, because it seems to be the only way many of them learned of the new regulations. Frequent changes of address by some recipients and problems in adequate mail delivery for this somewhat transient population all added to the confusion.

II. Comparison Of Recipients Who Failed To Report With The General Relief Payrolls Two Months Later

A. Introduction

There are now two distinct lists of people getting General Relief; those considered "employable" who pick up their checks in person at DES, and those considered "unemployable" who receive their checks at home in the mail. The previous section dealt with the 1,339 people in Boston and Lowell considered "employable" on October 15, 1971, who did not show up at their local DES offices to claim their checks. Interviews were completed with 96 people between December 23, 1971 and January 31, 1972. The results of those interviews, as reported in the preceding section, are far from what newspaper headline writers had led us to believe might be true by concentrating on the "no shows" (those who failed to report): "Relief Recipients Fail to Collect Checks; 20% didn't report in Mass.", 220 on Relief Placed in Jobs; 20% fail to pick up Checks".³⁰

³⁰Boston Globe, Dec.8,1971,p.6. and Herald Traveler,Dec.8,p.3,resp.



Suspicious of fraud and ineligibility are simply not supported by the data.

While conducting the interviewing, we also decided to compare the sample with the December 15, 1971 General Relief payroll. By this time, we assumed, the classification, bureaucratic and human difficulties, which, as our interviews were revealing, caused considerable confusion and suffering through October and November, would have been solved. We wanted to know how many people from our sample were still receiving General Relief two months later and whether they were classified as "employable" or "unemployable". In short, did the Department find that these people were fraudulent or ineligible and drop them from the rolls, or were they found to be like the rest of the General Relief population, still dependent, for some legitimate reason beyond their control, upon outside assistance?

B. Predictions

Before the General Relief work-registration program went into effect, 16% of the General Relief population "turned over," that is, went off the rolls, each month.³¹ Since it has been³² shown that as of December 1, 1971, only 335 people had found jobs (3.7% of those who reported in October) since the program started, we did not expect the turnover rate to be substantially affected by the program. By November 5, 1971, 43.5% of the

³¹Boston Globe, December 8, 1971, p.6.

³²Joint Department of Public Welfare Division of Employment
Security Press Release.



"employable" recipients who actually appeared to pick up their checks were reclassified as "unemployable" by DES and sent back to the Welfare Department. If, as we believe from our interviews, that the "no-shows" were not significantly different from the rest of the General Relief population, we would expect by December 15, 1971 to find a turnover rate of approximately 16% a month in our sample. We would also predict that at least 43.5%, if not more, of those from our sample still on General Relief would now be listed as "unemployable". This section reports on the results of our comparison of the December 15, 1971 and October 15, 1971 General Relief payrolls. Our predictions turn out to be accurate.

We also decided to make a similar comparison for those who refused to be interviewed for this study. Would there be any difference between this group and our random sample? We should point out that only about 14% of those contacted by mail refused to be interviewed and sent back the postcards enclosed. This is a smaller percentage than the 28% who refused to be interviewed in a study of the impact of the Flat Grant on AFDC recipients last year -- when ineligibility, willingness to work and fraud were not **issues** in the survey.³⁴

³³Boston Globe, November 6, 1971, p.1.

³⁴Statistical data from The Flat Grant: Impact on Recipients, Research Department, United Community Services, June 1971, p.2.



III. Methodology

There was some difficulty with the Welfare Department Computer Center in carrying out this task. Instead of the December 15, 1971 "unemployable" and "employable" payrolls, we ended up with the December 15, 1971 "employable" payroll and the January 1, 1972 "unemployable" payroll. The two-week difference is not critical. However, we were concerned, because the General Relief population is highly mobile, that the longer we waited, the fewer individuals, even if still eligible and receiving aid, would still be living in the areas we were working with, Boston and Lowell.

The list received from the Welfare Department was also incomplete. We expected to see between 15,000 and 16,000 names. We only saw 8,850. Unfortunately, the Department was unable immediately to determine why the list was short or to recompute it from the tapes. (The Computer Center usually took from two to three weeks to respond to a request). A decision was made, therefore, to work with what we already had. After some painstaking calculations it was determined that the list we had contained no other surprises. All the letters of the alphabet and all the areas of Boston and Lowell were included. It had the right distribution of male and female first names and Spanish surnames. Even the percentage of employables was about what we expected, 25%. We decided, then, to multiply all of the figures resulting from the payroll comparison by a factor of 1.75 -



enough to bring the total up to the expected number of 15,500.³⁵
All figures in the following paragraphs reflect this adjustment.

IV. Results

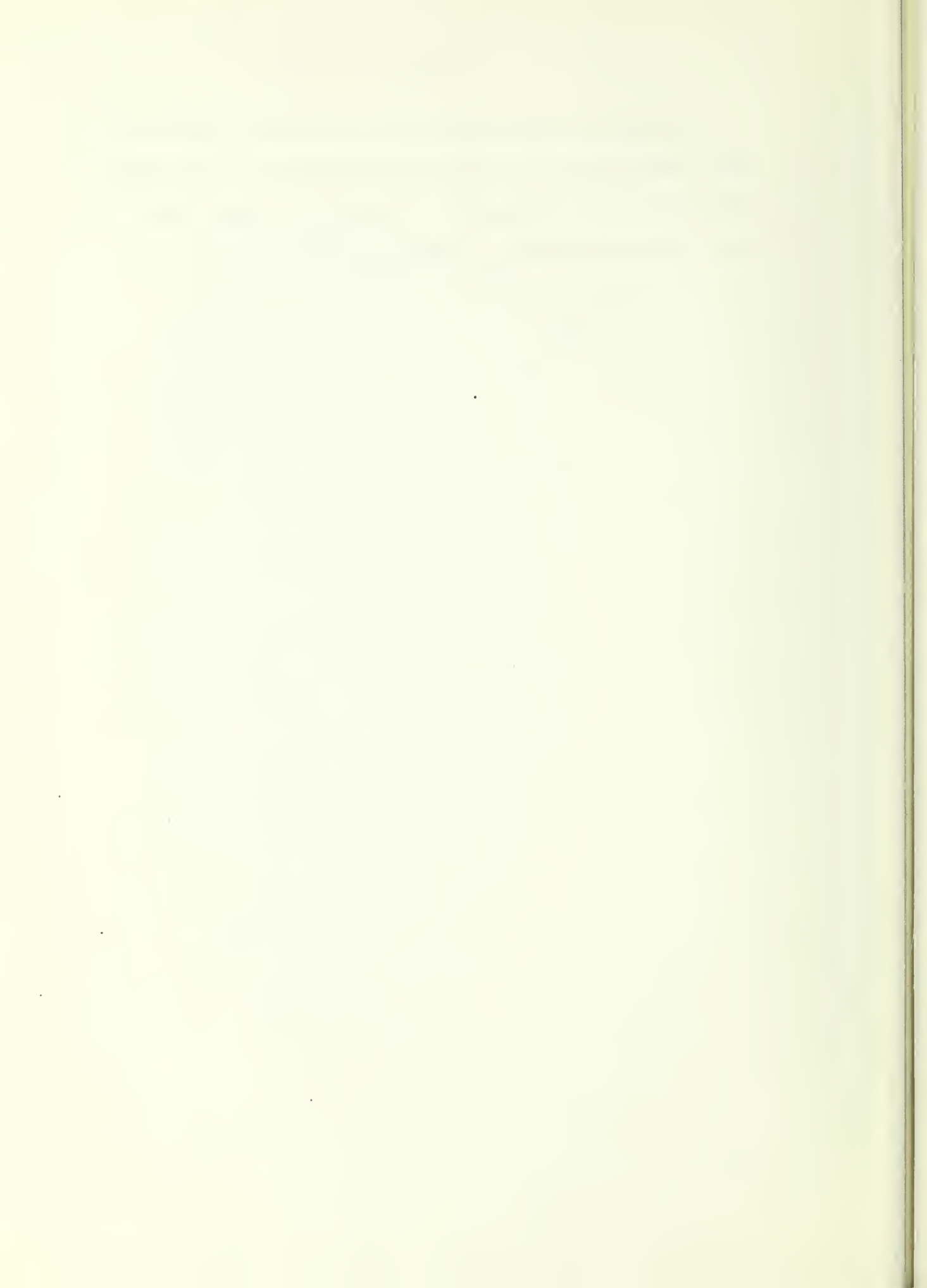
Of the 271 people in our random sample, 114 were listed as "employable" and still picking their checks up at DES. Ninety-five had been reclassified as "unemployable" and were again receiving their checks in the mail. Thus, a total of 209 people, or 77%, were still on General Relief. A normal turnover rate of 16% for two months would have left 191 people, or 71%. As predicted, there was no significant difference between our sample of "no-shows" and the rest of the General Relief population. Also, we predicted that at least 43.5% would have been reclassified as unemployable. Of those in our sample still on General Relief, 45% were considered "unemployable" at the time the payroll comparison was made.

What about the 218 refusals -- those who refused to be interviewed for this study by returning the postcards enclosed for that purpose? Of the 218, 179 (82%) were still receiving General Relief. Eighty-six people (48% of the 179) were still listed as "employable" and 93 people (52%) had been reclassified and listed as "unemployable". With a normal turnover rate, we would have expected 154, or 71% to still be on the rolls. Our comparison shows that even more people are still on the rolls.

³⁵The latest Welfare Department figures, September 1971, show that 15,303 people were receiving General Relief in Boston. An additional two to three hundred would then be expected in Lowell. It is assumed that these figures would not have changed substantially by the end of December.



Therefore, it seems apparent that the Welfare Department, after review, has not cut off the large majority of people who failed to report to DES and has, obviously, determined that their reasons for failure to report were legitimate.



Public Policy Recommendations

Reacting to the United Community Services and Social Welfare Regional Research Institute's reports, the UCS Public Policy Committee drew up the following recommendations. They were approved by the UCS Board of Directors on March 23, 1972.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ~~study~~^{studies} by both UCS and the Social Welfare Regional Research Institute at Boston College have clearly shown that the administrative costs of the GR-DES work-registration program far exceed the savings realized. Not only is the program costing more than the previous system, but it has so far been unable to place large numbers of people into either jobs or job-training.

Therefore, it is recommended that the General Relief-Division of Employment Security program be discontinued, in view of the high costs of the program, both in human and financial terms, as revealed by the joint UCS/SWRRI report.

Pending such action it is recommended:

- 1) That recipients be presumed unemployable until an individual case review determines otherwise.
- 2) That the Welfare Department accept the DES definition of employability or work out a common definition with DES as soon as possible.
- 3) Often the client will be sick, disabled, or otherwise unable to appear at DES in the 24 hours presently allotted. It is recommended that DFW caseworkers be given the authority to extend the amount of time DES will hold a check for one of their clients. Otherwise, once his check is returned by DES to the Welfare Department Central Finance Unit, the recipient may not be able to retrieve it for three or more weeks.



- 4) That there be a transportation allowance for those who do not live within walking distance of their DES office.
- 5) That an authorized representative of the DPW, empowered to untangle mistakes and misunderstandings be on duty at all times at each DES office participating in the program.
- 6) That every recipient determined to be employable receive a pamphlet explaining the GR/DES work-registration program, its procedures, and his right to appeal Department decisions. This pamphlet should be in Spanish and English.
- 7) That each Welfare Service Office establish a special telephone number for clients to call if they can't pick up their checks as expected or experience difficulties with the program. These numbers should be published in the pamphlet recommended above.

If the above recommendations are adopted, this new program will be more able to respond flexibly to the financial and employment needs of its clients.

Finally, it is recommended:

- 8) That the Department establish a single method of reporting reliable and adequate data so that the public can be informed, on an on-going basis, of the status of the work-registration program.



A P P E N D I C E S
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Appendix I

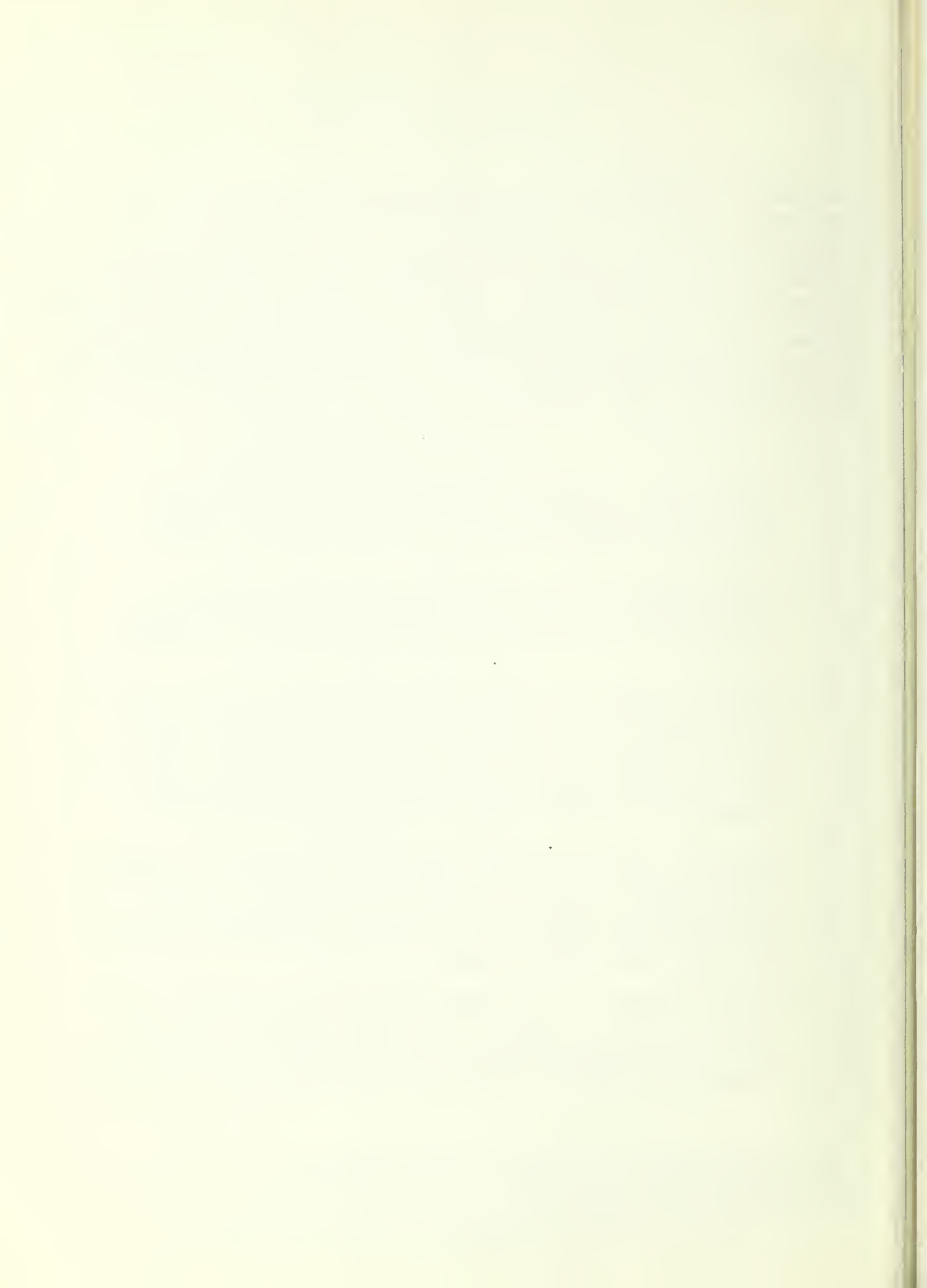
Summary of Findings*

The General Relief - Division of Employment Security Program was initiated by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the late summer of 1971 by the following provision in the appropriations bill: "that after October first, nineteen hundred and seventy-one every person eligible for an assistance check under chapter one hundred and seventeen of the General Laws, determined by the department to be an employable person, shall receive such check from the nearest office of the division of employment security." Little, if any, formal study had preceded this provision so that its effects, problems, and possible approaches toward implementation were generally unknown. Further, the Legislature did not appropriate any additional funds at that time to the Department of Public Welfare or the Division of Employment Security to develop a program to meet this new requirement.

The overall result of this provision has been the following:

1. A great deal of human suffering and individual costs on the part of those clients who were unable to obtain their checks and often went long periods without sufficient funds to meet their minimal needs.
2. Administrative costs of the program in the local offices of the DPW alone run over \$70,000 a month, according to our survey of the social workers in the Welfare Service Offices throughout the state.
3. There are strong indications that the new program has encouraged the use of maintenance vendor payments to overcome some of the difficulties encountered by clients in receiving money payments due to the new procedures. During the month of November, the first full month of the program, the maintenance vendor payments rose close to \$70,000 and the estimates of the December maintenance vendor payments suggests the rise was maintained.
4. When the costs of the central administration, overhead, increased maintenance vendor payments, and the administration of the Division of Employment Security are added to the WSO figure of \$70,000 it will probably come to two or three times this amount or between \$140,000 and \$200,000 per month. This comes to over \$1.5 million per year if these trends continue.
5. Liberal estimates of the probable reduction in the General Relief payroll due to this range from approximately \$49,000 to \$61,000 a month from those who do not pick up their checks at the employment office without good cause and from those who found employment through this program. These figures were derived using December

* An Evaluation Study of the General Relief-Division of Employment Security Program prepared by the Social Welfare Regional Research Institute at Boston College with the collaboration of United Community Services of Metropolitan Boston, March, 1972.



as a sample month. These figures tend to be somewhat inflated due to the fact that they are not adjusted for normal turnover in the General Relief program.

6. In fact, the payroll for General Relief, not including vendor payments, went down only \$48,929 from September through December, which covers the first months of the program when the highest savings were expected.
7. Even if the human costs are disregarded, it is obvious that the administrative costs alone far exceed the payroll savings in this program.
8. Of those people who did not pick up checks, 40% were ill, disabled, or hospitalized, according to two surveys on the first pay period of the program. Another 22% reported that they did not know of the new requirement and administrative errors by DES and DPW were involved in 14% of the cases. Approximately 18% were already working - those who were already working full time were not supposed to report, and part-time workers stated they were working at the time of the appointment with DES.
9. Only 524 clients had found employment as a December 31, 1971. This represents an average of 105 recipients per pay period out of the thousands who reported - only 1.4% of "employable" recipients who reported to D.E.S., and only 2.2% of those persons that D.E.S. considered "referrable".
10. Only 16 of the 43 persons surveyed - that D.E.S. reported as having received jobs - obtained employment through the services of the Division of Employment Security. Twenty-five reported that they had received employment through their own efforts and not through the new GR-DES program. Two recipients said they did not in fact receive jobs.
11. Over 60% of those persons who reportedly received employment since the beginning of the program appear to have obtained jobs on their own efforts according to a small, state-wide sample.
12. Many clients were already unemployed again at the time of the survey in December 1971 and January 1972 and some had returned to the General Relief payroll.

The operational decision by the Department of Public Welfare to consider clients "employable" unless they could be determined to be "unemployable" inflated the number who had to report to D.E.S. Many of these clients were subsequently determined to be unemployable. This involved additional costs to DPW, to D.E.S., and to those clients who were unable to report due to illness and other reasons. Further, it placed the burden on the clients

to prove to the Department that they were in fact unemployable and had good cause for not reporting to D.E.S. This resulted in suffering for hundreds of clients and additional problems for the social workers to remedy incorrect classifications and check cancellations.

The Department could have operated on the opposite assumption that clients were unemployable unless determined to be employable. Those who were seeking employment and were obviously employable could have been classified initially and then on the basis of a case-by-case intensive review, those who were found to be employable in the remainder of the caseload could have been so classified. This would have involved fewer errors which resulted in client hardships and meant lower costs in following up incorrect classifications. Further, it would have permitted a phasing in of the program which would have allowed the Department time for Training and revision of procedures where problems arose.

Our findings on the management problems in administering the new GR-DES program concern the Department of Public Welfare which asked the Institute to look at this subject. Six problem areas were identified which represent deficiencies in the administrative implementation of the program by DPW. These were the following: (1) overloading of DPW staff in the Welfare Service Offices (which is obviously due to the lack of additional funds for the administration of the program), (2) incompatibility of DPW and D.E.S. operational definitions of nonemployability, (3) problems arising from changes in the General Relief payroll procedures, particularly the transitional problems due to the shift from the local Finance Units to a central computer system for the state, (4) inadequate information and training in the new payroll procedures for the WSO payroll clerks, (5) insufficient staffing, equipping, and procedures at the GR-DES Project Office, and (6) low staff morale resulting from the manner in which the changes in the General Relief program were developed and implemented.



Appendix II

Conclusions*

1. The stringent new work regulations governing employable welfare recipients in New York State have not resulted in substantial numbers of welfare recipients becoming self-supporting.
2. The program is costly to administer and in October, the additional administrative expenses of \$82,474 a month far outweighed the savings of \$44,690 due to case closings.
3. Welfare recipients who are employable are eager to work and welcome help in finding jobs, but:
 - a. A mandatory referral procedure is unnecessary for the recipient with work skills and a good job record who has had to resort to welfare because of the most severe unemployment in ten years.
 - b. The program makes no provisions for job training and skilled-counseling leading to actual jobs for the low-skilled and chronically unemployed recipient. Increasing automation and unemployment rates of 10-35% in ghetto areas further exacerbate the problem.
 - c. The referral procedures create severe hardships for the mother of pre-school and school age children and interfere with her inherent rights to decide what is best for her children. More mothers want to work than can find jobs and adequate day and after school care for their children. The WIN program and government sponsored training programs have been regularly oversubscribed.
4. ^{**} The SES does not distinguish in its reports between the temporary and low paying jobs which do not lead to independence and the permanent jobs, conveying a misleading impression of the program's success.
5. Although the new law has resulted in forcing about 10% of the recipients required to report off welfare, no official studies have been done to substantiate the claim that these recipients are "unwilling to accept jobs or training" and no record is kept of re-applications from those whose assistance has been terminated.

*The New York Welfare Work Legislation in New York State: A Study and Evaluation in Monroe County prepared by the League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metropolitan Area and the Center for Community Issues Research, December, 1971.



a. Early reports from our survey of closed cases indicate that the recipients were trying to comply and that the loss of assistance has created severe hardships.

b. Ignored further in making such a claim is the impact on the communities of refusing assistance to people in need who are unable to cope educationally, physically, or emotionally with the complex, discouraging, and expensive regulations in order to qualify.

c. Despite the new law, the number of new applicants for assistance runs as high as 75 a day.

6. The Work Experience Program (WEP) is providing the municipal, county, and the state governments with workers to do essential work at no cost. Were those jobs not filled by the welfare recipients, some agencies would be hard pressed to maintain the current freeze on hiring. The result is that the DSS subsidizes the agencies using the recipients and the welfare recipients have even less access to legitimate positions.

7. The law imposes a series of hurdles which make it difficult for eligible people to become qualified and continue to receive assistance as follows:

a. The DSS no longer mails checks to employable recipients, regardless of how far from the SES office they may live or the availability of public transportation. Recipients must report semi-monthly to pick up their checks and to have interviews at the SES office and to go out on job referrals; all of this at their own expense out of meager budgets which had just been reduced by 10% a few weeks prior to passage of the law.

b. Although the SES office is in the center of the city, all questions of illness and employability must be taken back to the DSS office, six miles away.

c. The procedures are so involved that recipients have experienced repeated difficulties in maintaining their eligibility.

d. The decision as to who is "employable" is open to wide variation.

e. Recipients have no options to refuse jobs which are unsuitable or which pay below the state minimum wage and they are not fully informed as to the rules which might protect them from arbitrary or illegal decisions.



f. Non-compliance penalties are invoked in a routine fashion but recipients have little understanding of the pre-termination review and Fair Hearing procedures available to them.

g. The new laws provide that any employee of the DSS can be summarily fired for failing to abide fully by all regulations. Responsible officials of the DSS have stated: "If the welfare rolls aren't reduced in Monroe County, you watch to see who goes. All our jobs are on the line."

**SES (State Employment Service) is the New York equivalent to our Division of Employment Security.

DSS (Department of Social Services) is the New York equivalent to our Department of Public Welfare.



UNITED COMMUNITY SERVICES

AND

SOCIAL WELFARE REGIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Questionnaire -- General Relief Survey

Address of Interview _____
(Street and Number) (City or Town)

Date _____

Name of Interviewer _____

My name is _____ and I'm helping the
SOCIAL WELFARE REGIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE at BOSTON COLLEGE and
UNITED COMMUNITY SERVICES to conduct an interview. We would like
to ask you a few questions that will only take about ten minutes
of your time. No names are used on our questionnaires.
First . . .

1. How many people live here with you? _____

Who are they? (INTERVIEWER: FOR ANY CHILDREN, ASK AGE)

Person (by relationship, i.e. wife, mother, son, etc.)	(Age for Children)
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	
f.	



2. Did you receive a notice from the Welfare Department about picking up your relief check?

☐ Yes What did the notice say? _____

☐ No Do you know that people who are receiving General Relief payments and are determined to be employable must go to the Employment Office and pick up their checks?

☐ Yes How do you know this? _____

☐ No

3. Did you go to the Division of Employment Security (Employment Office) to pick up your last check:

☐ Yes What happened there? _____

(SKIP TO Q. 6)

☐ No Why didn't you go there?

☐ Didn't know about it

☐ Sick

☐ No money to get there

☐ Too far to travel

☐ Cannot work

☐ Did not want to be interviewed for a job

☐ Forgot

☐ No one to look after children

☐ Other (specify) _____

4. Did the Welfare Department contact you because you didn't go to the Employment Office?

☐ Yes a. How? _____

b. What did they say?

c. Then what did you do?

☐ No

5. Have you received a check even though you didn't go to DES?

☐ Yes When? _____

(SKIP TO Q. 6)

☐ No a. Have you contacted anyone at Welfare to try to get a check?

☐ Yes Who did you contact? _____

What did they say? _____

☐ No Why not? _____

b. How have you been paying for things without your General Relief check?

☐ working (Skip to Q. 6a)

☐ borrowing money

☐ living on what I have now

☐ other (specify) _____



6. Are you working now?

☐ Yes a. What do you do? _____

b. Is that full-time or part-time?

☐ full-time

☐ part-time (Skip to Q. 10)

☐ No

7. When did you last work? _____

8. What kind of work did you do? _____

9. Would you be able to go to work if you could find a job?

☐ Yes

☐ No Why not?

☐ sick

☐ too old

☐ no one to care for children

☐ no skills

☐ other (specify) _____

10. What are you going to do about money for supporting yourself?

11. How long have you lived in Massachusetts? _____

12. Where did you live before? _____

13. How long had (have) you been receiving General Relief? _____

14. How old are you? _____

[illegible]

Appendix IV

Methodology

I. For Personal Interviews

The sample of people to be interviewed for this survey was drawn from a list of General Relief recipients, classified as "employable", who failed to pick up their October 15, 1971 General Relief checks at their assigned Division of Employment Security (DES) office, according to the Department of Public Welfare. The cities of Boston and Lowell were chosen for this survey. (The reasons for this decision are included in the text of the report.)

The list of recipients who "failed to report" was provided to us by the Department of Public Welfare. Before it was released to us, the Department was, by law, obliged to secure at least tacit approval from those to be interviewed. To accomplish this, a letter was sent by Public Welfare Commissioner Minter to all of those in Boston and Lowell who failed to report at their assigned DES office to pick up their October 15th check. (It was originally planned to conduct interviews in Lawrence, too, but the number of recipients who failed to report was so small, Lawrence was not included.) A postcard was enclosed for use by those who did not wish to be interviewed. By signing and returning this card, the recipient was removed from the list before the Department of Public Welfare provided it to us. Two hundred eighteen individuals returned these cards to the Welfare Department.

The remaining names and addresses (1,121) became the basis for selecting our sample. A random sample of 244 residents of Boston was chosen from the Boston list. Since the list of recipients in Lowell who failed to report contained only 27 names, it was decided to attempt to interview all of these people instead of drawing a sample from them.

This report is based on 96 completed interviews with 80 people in Boston and 16 in Lowell. Incomplete interviews were primarily due to three factors: 1) interviewers could not locate the individuals at home, even after repeated tries at different times of the day or evening (60 interviews), 2) persons were contacted but did not wish to be interviewed (14 interviews), 3) individuals were not longer at the address provided to us by the Welfare Department (87 interviews). Fourteen other interviews were not completed for other reasons (people in the hospital, etc.).

II. For Payroll Comparison

For the second section of the report on those who failed to report, we compared the names from our sample (the 271 people in Boston and Lowell) with the December 15, 1971 "employable" and the January 1, 1972 "unemployable" General Relief payrolls to determine their status two months after they "failed to report". (The General Relief payroll at the Welfare Department is now divided into two parts -- Employables and Unemployables.)



